Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/494142134

Downloaded on Mar 27, 2024

Uncut's list of top albums is stuck in past

Baby-boomer titles account for an astonishing 66.5 per cent

JUAN RODRIGUEZ

Uh-oh — the Baby Boomer Aroma continues to affect judgments on the history of rock, specifically the all-time best albums.

Last week the Guardian suggested 1966 may have been the best year ever for pop and rock, citing three albums as tops: Pet Sounds by the Beach Boys, Blonde on Blonde by Bob Dylan and Revolver by the Beatles.

A few weeks before that, Uncut, the magazine arm of the venerable weekly British trade tabloid New Musical Express, published its list of the 200 greatest albums. Baby-boomer albums accounted for an astonishing 66.5 per cent of the total (23.5 per cent for the '60s, 43 per cent for the '70s). The 2000s accounted for a puny four per cent, the '90s just 11.5 per cent. Does this mean the "classics" from the early days of rock's cultural domination rank higher than those artists — particularly electronica artists — trying to move the form forward?

As for the acts that accumulated the most points from 59 chosen critics and industry nabobs, here's the top 10: the Beatles, Dylan, David Bowie, the Rolling Stones, the Velvet Underground, Van Morrison, the Beach Boys, Neil Young, the Smiths (the only non-boomer choice) and — surprise — jazz great Miles Davis.

It was interesting to see that some of the most ballyhooed acts of the last 20 or 30 years fared rather poorly. U2, incessantly hyped as the greatest thing since sliced baloney, placed just one album, 1991's Achtung Baby, which came in 94th place. Nirvana was represented not by grunge's exemplar, Nevermind, but by In Utero, at No. 124. Bruce Springsteen's widely hyped Born to Run was an also-ran at No. 96. Meanwhile, Michael Jackson's monster 30-million-seller Thriller, the most celebrated album of the '80s (at least), barely made Uncut's cut, at No. 180.

All of which goes to show how fickle fanboy critics are, or that they're beginning to rethink the big picture.

The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper, surely the most famous (and wildly overrated) album of all, topped Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Albums of All Time survey in 2012; the magazine called it "the most important rock 'n' roll album ever made, an unsurpassed adventure in concept, sound, songwriting, cover art and studio technology by the greatest rock 'n' roll group of all time." But it was relegated to No. 21 by Uncut. This reflects the ongoing re-evaluation of this hodgepodge of British music hall and esoterica, which was saved only by one of the all-time epics: A Day in the Life, a mini great artwork by itself.

Uncut's top 10 includes (in descending order) Pet Sounds, Revolver, Astral Weeks (Van Morrison), the Velvet Underground and Nico, the Beatles' White Album, Forever Changes (Love), Blonde on Blonde, The Queen Is Dead (the Smiths), Highway 61 Revisited (Dylan) and Marquee Moon (Television).

Compare that with the top 10 from Rolling Stone's 2012 list: Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Pet Sounds, Revolver, Highway 61 Revisited, Rubber Soul (the Beatles), What's Going On (Marvin Gaye), Exile on Main Street (the Rolling Stones), London Calling (the Clash), Blonde on Blonde and the White Album.

It's nice to see Uncut's high marks for Morrison's 1968 instant classic Astral Weeks, which was among the first concept albums and, more importantly, an audacious work of art.

But you'd hardly know that black lives matter from the Uncut list — surprising, since the British are known for appreciating classic soul and R&B. Why is Jimi Hendrix's 1968 double-album extravaganza Electric Ladyland dawdling at No. 42, and James Brown's 1963 epic Live at the Apollo at No. 68? Let's face it: rock music wouldn't exist were it not for black music, and the latter albums deserve Top 10 status.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band topped a Rolling Stone survey in 2012, but was relegated to No. 21 by Uncut. APPLE CORPS LTD.

Some anomalies: Leonard Cohen is huge in Britain, but he's represented by 1971's Songs of Love and Hate and not the more universal 1988 hit I'm Your Man. Serge Gainsbourg joins Daft Punk as the only Frenchmen to make the list, with 1971's Histoire de Melody Nelson, a 27-minute song-story cycle.

And none of Frank Zappa's 100-plus albums made the list. Surely 1966's Freak Out! should rank high, being one of the first double albums and one of the first concept albums (exploring Los Angeles hippie culture versus straight law), and for the most imaginative and prescient production of its time. Not to mention We're Only in It for the Money, Lumpy Gravy, the late-career album The Yellow Shark and the posthumous Civilization Phaze III, plus any number of live albums.

Finally, some suggestions: While I love the wondrously complex and innocent production of Pet Sounds, I prefer the refurbished double-album version of The Smile Sessions (with the various versions of Good Vibrations and Heroes and Villains, surely the finest back-to-back singles ever). There is the oft-forgotten Presenting the Fabulous Ronettes (for Phil Spector's glorious Wall of Sound). While Exile on Main Street is the consensus choice as best Stones LP, and is worthy of the accolades, I like Beggars Banquet and the later Some Girls. I'm not crazy about David Bowie's glam albums, but love the trenchant Station to Station and really admire his chilling final album, Blackstar, on which he is backed by a genuine jazz group (led by forward-looking saxophonist Donny McCaslin). Now that's progress!

I'll stop there. Best-of lists can drive you nuts!

rodriguez.music@gmail.com

Jimi Hendrix's Electric Ladyland should have been in Uncut's Top 10, and he isn't the only black artist who was given short shrift, writes Juan Rodriguez. EVENING STANDARD/GETTY IMAGES

HARRELSON HAS JUST THE THING TO EASE YOUR PAIN

DOUG CAMILLI

Medical marijuana is legal in Hawaii. Woody Harrelson has a home in Maui. So why wouldn't he apply to own a medical-marijuana dispensary?

The state will award eight licences for such places, to sell legal weed to patients. There are 66 applications from 59 people and companies, Honolulu magazine reports.

There would have been a lot more, but ... oh, what was I saying? Never mind, I'll finish that joke later. (No, no, no. Just kidding. Not me; I'm a tequila guy.)

Anyway, Woody applied through this company he has, Simple Organic Living LLC. (Sounds like a front for a dope dealer, doesn't it? Oh, wait ...)

Woodrow (the first name he uses on the application) has long advocated legalization of marijuana. He's 54.

Lifestyles of the rich and famous: Elton John told CBS talk-show host James Corden that he doesn't have a cellphone.

Startled, Corden asked: "So what do you do, then?"

Answer: "There's usually a security person with a phone. ... I do have an iPad."

Elton's 68.

The money is out there: We learned last month that Gillian Anderson had to fight for a paycheque as big as David Duchovny's for this revival of The X-Files.

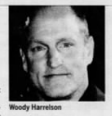
Now the Mirror, in England, has some numbers: they're each getting about $230,000 US per episode.

Anderson was first offered about half Duchovny's pay, she told the Hollywood Reporter last month, but the front office came to its senses pretty quickly.

History repeats itself, apparently: she recently told the Daily Beast website that back in the 1990s, it took her three years of shooting the original series before she got paid as much as Duchovny.

She's 47. He's 55.

The new Ryan Reynolds movie Deadpool, a quasi-comic superhero picture, has been banned in China because of bad words, cartoon-level gore and violence, and some nudity — in short, all the things that make a movie a big hit. Deprived of so much potential revenue, Reynolds is doing what he can to milk some publicity from the ban, at least.



Woody Harrelson

Interviewed on the website Digital Spy the other day, he said this, using the portentous intonation so common in movie trailers: "In a world divided by fear, one man must stand alone — Deadpool, rated '(bad word) you, you'll never see this.'"

He went on more seriously: "It's easy for me to wear that like a badge of honour, like 'we got banned in China,' but honestly, I hate that. ... I would like the people of China to see Deadpool."

He's 39.

Lionel Richie wants to write a book, but not yet. On Jimmy Kimmel's show the other night, Richie answered a question on the subject this way:

"If I want to do a humanitarian book, I can do it now. (But) to do the real book, I've got to wait a couple of years until everybody passes away."

He's 66.

tedcamilli@gmail.com

Taylor's Canadian tour to include Bell Centre stop

James Taylor will be spending much of his spring in Canada. The legendary singer-songwriter has booked 15 shows on a cross-country tour, including a May 13 date at the Bell Centre.

Tickets for the Montreal show cost $67 to $143.50 and go on sale Friday, Feb. 19 at 10 a.m. via Evenko (514-790-2525; evenko.ca).

Taylor's last Montreal appearance was at Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier of Place des Arts for the 2012 Montreal International Jazz Festival. His most recent album is Before This World, released last year.

James Taylor last played Montreal in 2012 as part of the jazz festival. MARIE-FRANCE COALLIER/FILES

Copyright © 2024 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.
Powered by Newspapers.com